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ABSTRACT

This report focuses on developmental education instruction for state supported students in Washington who lack the skills to perform college-level work, but have skills above the level of adult basic education. It describes overall enrollments, student characteristics, enrollments for subsets that have been identified through data matches, course effort, kinds of courses taken, and student success. Findings indicate that: (1) in any term, 17% of students are enrolled in at least one developmental course; (2) the typical developmental student is younger and more likely to be attending full-time to complete a degree than are all college students not enrolled in developmental classes; (3) students who receive federal or state financial aid or public assistance, and recent high school graduates, are more likely to take a developmental education course than are students in general; (4) among first-time college students, 33% were enrolled in at least one developmental course; (5) 46% of recent high school graduates attending college for the first time took at least one course; (6) developmental courses comprise about 10% of all state supported courses; (7) math is the area of predominant need in developmental courses; and (8) students who take developmental courses have higher retention rates than those who do not. The remainder of the document provides detailed statistics on enrollment, student characteristics, students receiving financial aid, course effort, and retention. (AS)

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Developmental Education Trends in Washington Community Colleges and Technical Colleges

Washington State Board
for
Community and Technical Colleges

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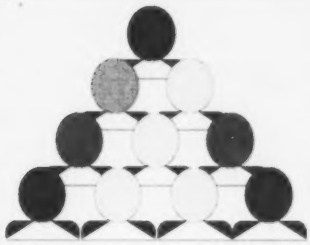

Research Report
No. 98-1

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Education Division

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION TRENDS IN WASHINGTON COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

February 1998

Overview

This report focuses on developmental education instruction for state supported students lacking the skills to perform college-level work but with skills above the level of adult basic education. It describes overall enrollments, student characteristics, enrollments for subsets that have been identified through data matches, course effort, kinds of courses taken, and student success.

Summary of Findings

- In any term, 17 percent of students are enrolled in at least one developmental course.
- The typical developmental student is younger and more likely to be attending full-time to complete a degree than are all college students not enrolled in developmental classes.
- Subsets of students who received federal or state financial aid or public assistance are more likely to take a developmental education course than are students in general. Recent high school graduates are also more likely to take developmental education courses than students in general.
- Among first-time college students, 33 percent were enrolled in at least one developmental course. Among the subset of recent high school graduates attending college, 46 percent of all first time students took at least one course. A recent nationwide study found that 41 percent of all first-time two-year college students take a developmental course.

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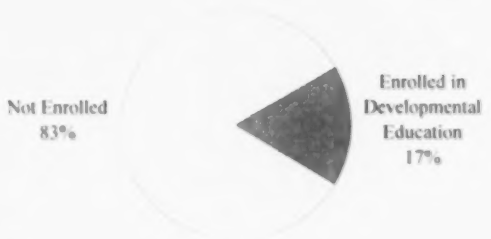
- Developmental courses comprise about 10 percent of all college state supported course effort (FTE). Effort has increased about 8 percent in the past five years compared to 3 percent for all state supported courses.
- The average student takes less than 2 developmental courses. Math is the area of predominant need.
- Students who take developmental courses have better retention patterns than those who do not, indicating that developmental education is a sound investment.

Overall Enrollments: Using fall 1997 as the most recent snapshot, a total of 28,678 students (17 percent of all students) enrolled in at least one developmental course.

The average student took 6 credits of developmental courses along with 7 credits of college level instruction.

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Developmental Education in Fall 1997

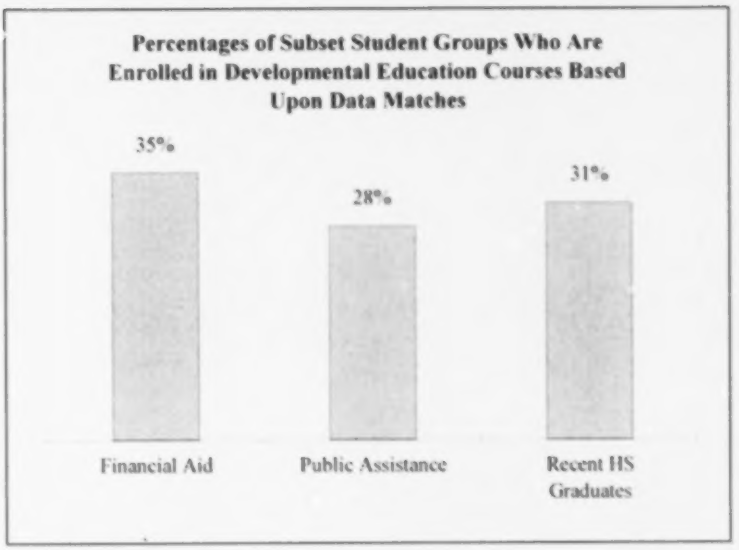


Student Characteristics: The typical developmental education student was 26 years old, two years younger than the typical student. She was more likely to be enrolled full-time (83 percent compared to 54 percent of all students). She was also more likely than the typical student to be planning to complete a degree (56 percent compared to 34 percent). More than half of all developmental students (59 percent) were attending for the purpose of college transfer while about a third (34 percent) were attending for workforce preparation.

Washington Community & Technical Colleges
State Supported Studies
Fall Quarter 1997

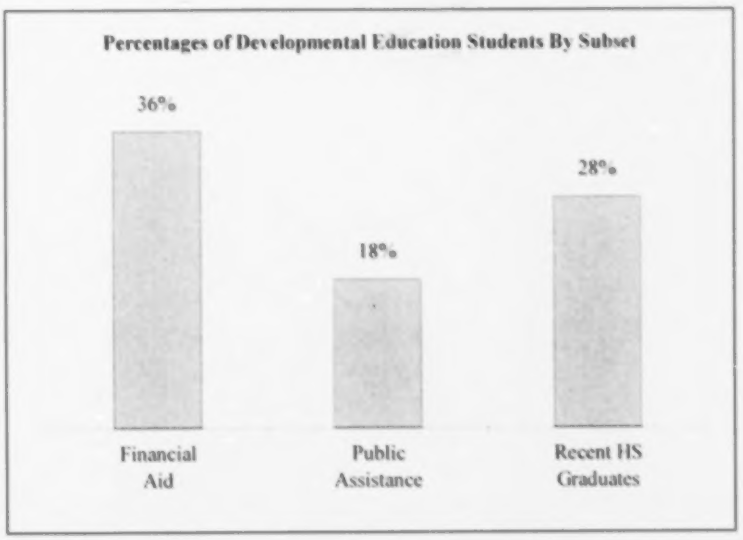
	Dev Ed	All Students
Headcount	28,678	171,414
% Female	59%	59%
% Students of Color	23%	24%
% Full-Time	83%	54%
% Disabled	6%	5%
% Planning 2 Year Degree	56%	34%
% Purpose is Transfer	59%	40%
% Purpose is Workforce Trng	34%	47%
% Worked Full-Time	21%	26%
% Worked Part-Time	37%	26%
Median Age	26	28

Subset Enrollments: Three subsets of students each have higher enrollment rates than all students in general (17 percent). These are:



- Thirty-five percent (35%) of all students who receive financial aid took at least one developmental studies course.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of students who receive public assistance were enrolled in a developmental education course.
- Finally, 31 percent of all recent high school graduates (students 21 or younger who graduated high school within the past three years) were enrolled in a developmental studies course.

Financial aid students comprise 36 percent of all developmental education students. Welfare recipients comprise 18 percent (another 30 percent of welfare students were enrolled in pre-college adult education and GED courses). Finally, recent high school graduates comprise 28 percent of all developmental students. While most developmental students are older, changing demographic projections heighten the importance of this group.



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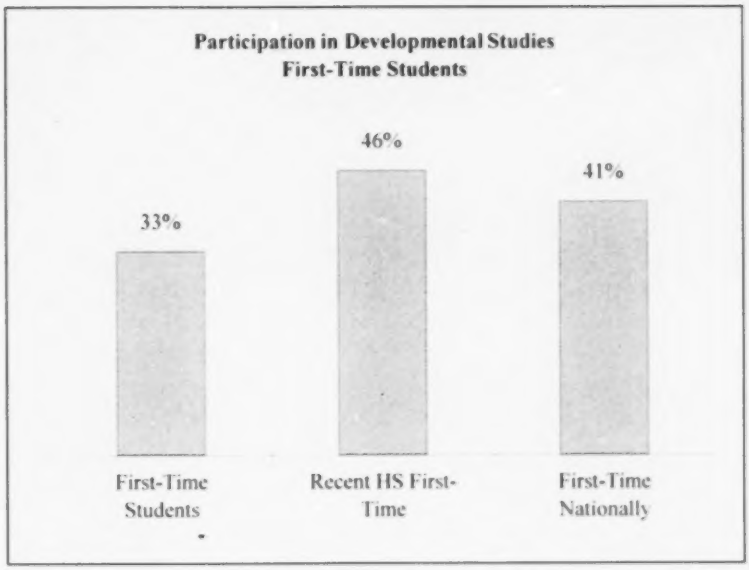
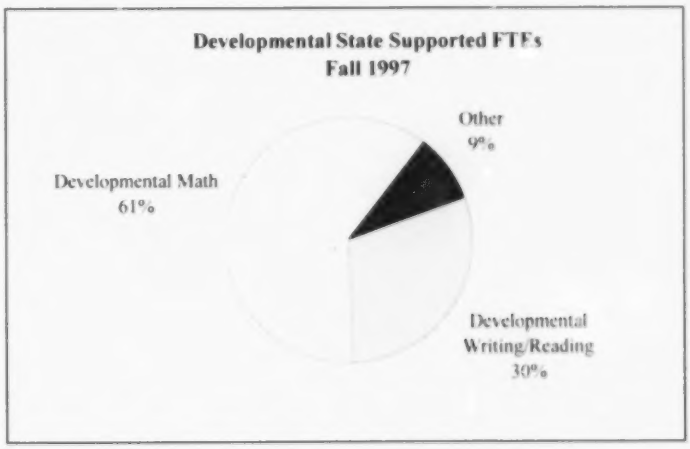
First-Time Students: Among first-time college students, 33 percent were enrolled in at least one developmental course in 1996-97. This rate is 46 percent for first-time students who were recent high school graduates. A nationwide study for 1995-96 found that 41 percent of all first-time students were enrolled in at least one developmental course.

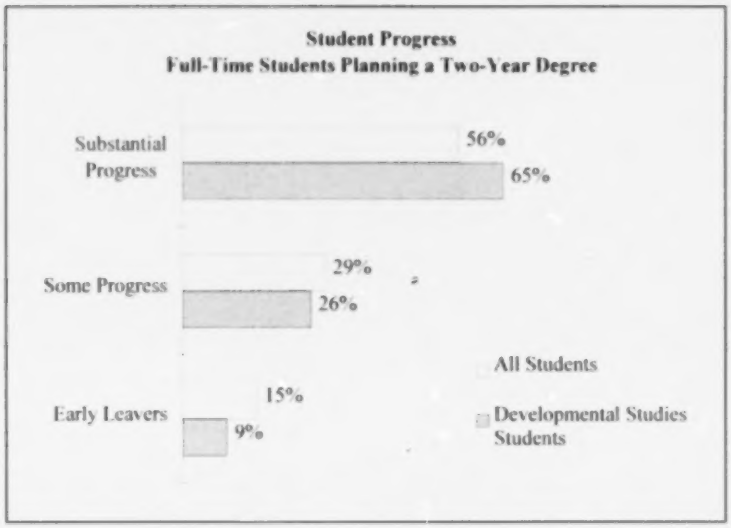


Course Effort: In fall 1997, the community and technical colleges devoted 11,342 FTEs (10 percent of total state supported course effort) to developmental courses. Sixty-one percent of this effort was in developmental math, making this by far the area of greatest need.

In the past five year period, developmental courses have increased around 8 percent compared to 3 percent for all state supported courses.



Student Retention: Students who take developmental education courses have higher retention rates than students who do not, providing strong evidence that providing developmental education is a sound investment for helping students meet their goals.



Developmental education students are significantly more likely to make substantial progress (65 percent compared to 56 percent) and far less likely to leave college after only one quarter (9 percent compared to 15 percent). The cohort for this is degree-seeking students who started in fall quarter 1995.[1]

[1] The State Board uses as a measure of student progress, the number of quarters that new degree-seeking students were enrolled over a two year period. Substantial progress is defined as attending four or more quarters; some progress is defined as attending 2-3 quarters; and early leaver is defined as attending 1 quarter. For more information on this approach to student retention, see the 1996-97 Academic Year Report (Student Progress section) and Research Report 97-3 on the SBCTC world wide web site www.sbctc.ctc.edu. Look for "Publications".